

# Soldiers

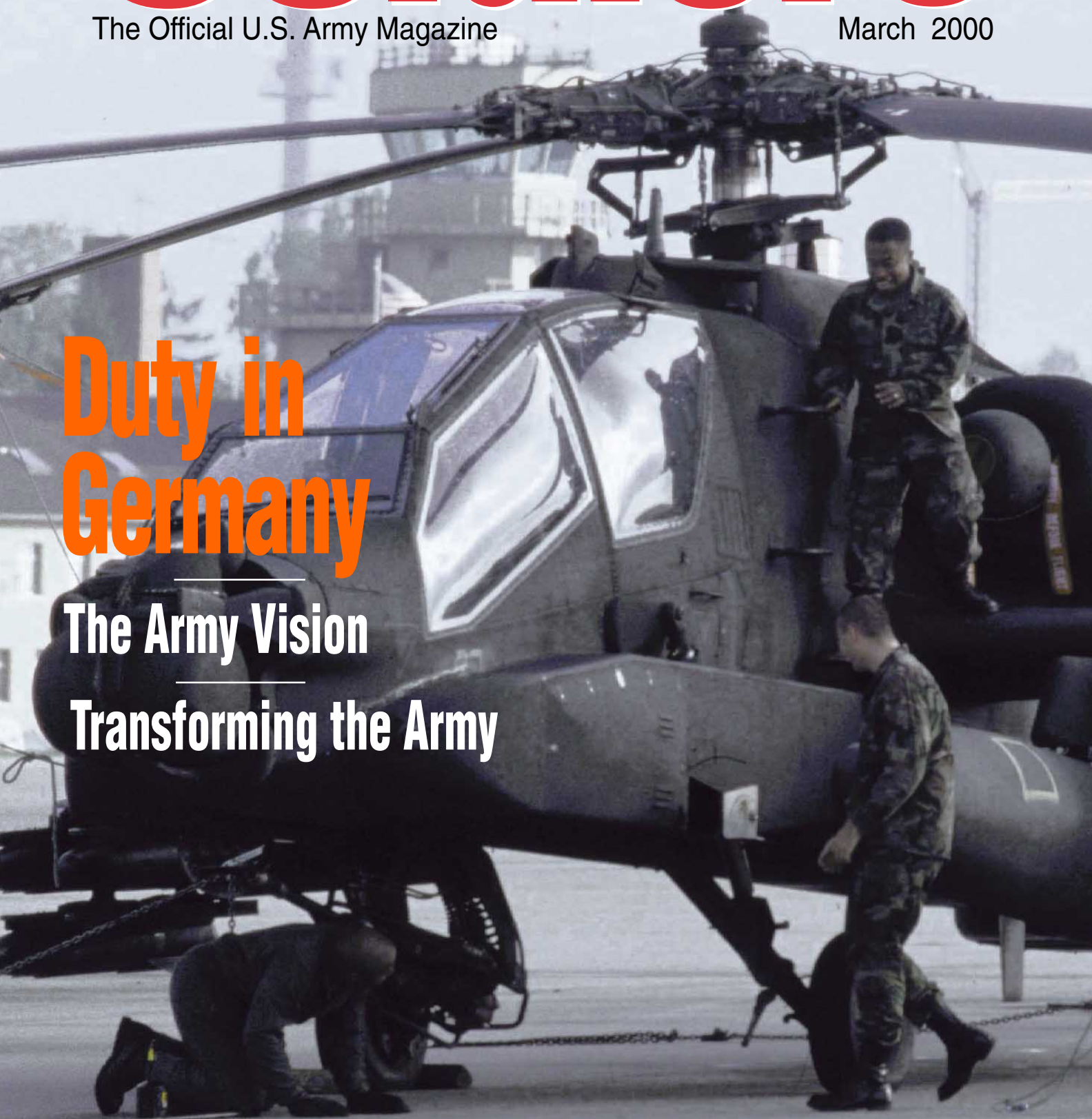
The Official U.S. Army Magazine

March 2000

**Duty in  
Germany**

**The Army Vision**

**Transforming the Army**







Soldiers from the 3rd Bde., 1st Inf. Div., stationed in Vilseck man an operations center during training for Kosovo.



The Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels is well known to most Germany-based troops.



The Cold War may be over, but new tensions in U.S. Army, Europe's area of responsibility ensure that its soldiers are still on ...

# Duty in

# Germany

Story and Photos by Heike Hasenauer

**A** TOUR in Germany used to mean being forward-deployed on "freedom's frontier," in the heart of "Cold War" country, not far from the borders of Warsaw Pact nations and the ever-present threat of communism. Soldiers stationed there knew full well what they were up against.

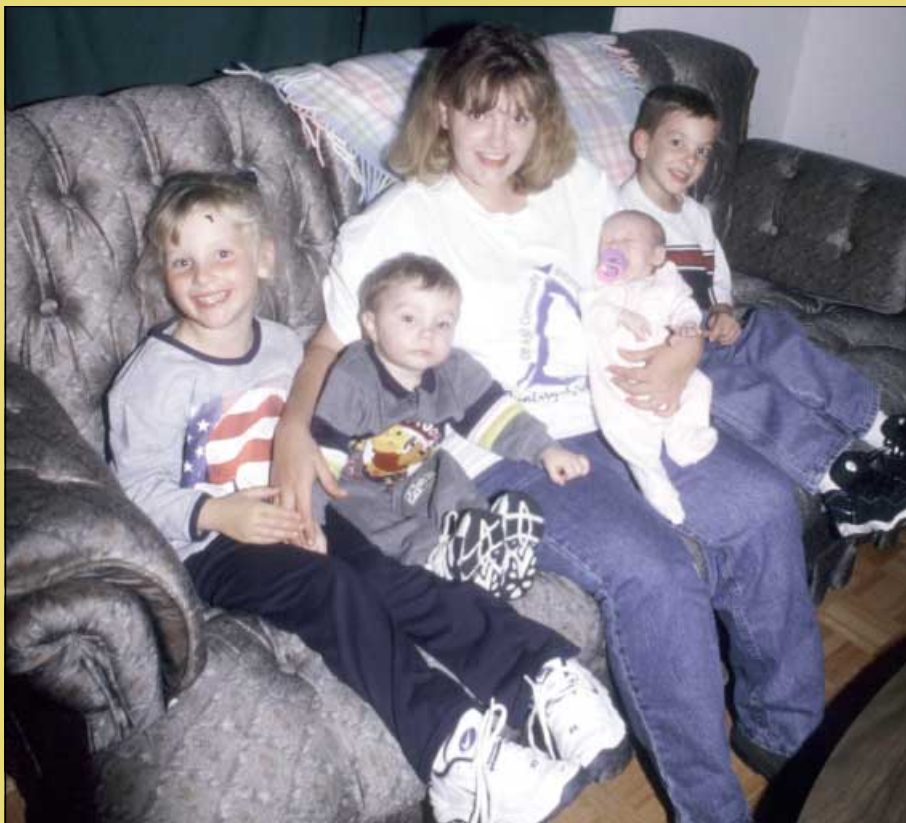
In those days, training focused on one contingency, a potential World War III that would involve hundreds of thousands of troops and massive amounts of heavy armor and firepower, for a long-lasting ground war.

With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the end of the Cold War, former enemies now train together in Partnership for Peace exercises across the European

A cyclist crosses the bridge over the Main River in Würzburg, home of the 1st Infantry Division. The city is one of many places in Germany that still host American troops.



Duty in Germany offers soldiers and their families the chance to tour some of Europe's greatest sites, including Würzburg's stately Residenz.



**Providing a decent standard of living for soldiers' families is a prime USAREUR objective. Here SPC Randy Archer's wife, Jessica, shares time with her children.**

## Duty in Germany

*continent. The places where U.S. soldiers once would never have set foot are now the places where they are keeping the peace. And the contingencies they train for have in recent years become increasingly frequent real-life missions, sending many Germany-based soldiers on repeated deployments throughout the European Theater.*

ACROSS the Main River, Festung Marienberg — a fortified hilltop castle constructed between 1200 and 1600 as home to the wealthy and powerful prince-bishops — overlooks Würzburg.

Germany's famed Romantic Road, studded with medieval towns, castles and churches, originates in the picturesque Baroque city and continues for 260 miles to the Austrian border.

The city, home to the 1st Infantry

Division, is one of the many places in Germany where U.S. soldiers and their families are welcomed with open arms. That's especially important today, when many Germany-based soldiers deploy often.

"The fact that we in Bavaria call the 1st Inf. Div. 'The Bavarian Division' speaks for itself," said Bavarian Minister-President Dr. Edmund Stoiber, who recently addressed U.S. soldiers and members of the German Bundeswehr at the annual state reception in Ansbach.

"Today, Germany is grateful to every service member in the U.S. Army and the Bundeswehr for performing difficult duty in the Balkans, which is not without danger," Stoiber continued.

"This expression of thanks also goes to the families, who have to bear long separations from their loved ones," Stoiber said.

Jessica Archer's husband, SPC Randy Archer, from Headquarters and

HQs. Company, 3rd Brigade, in Vilseck, recently trained at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels for the third time in six months — preparing to go to Kosovo. "In August, he spent 10 days at home between training," she said.

Archer said her husband doesn't see their four children much, because they're usually in bed when he arrives home at 8 or 9 p.m.

In Bamberg, Germany, Melissa Barnes' husband, SSG Bruce Barnes, a member of 3rd Bde., 82nd Engineer Battalion, was also training at Hohenfels, also in preparation for Kosovo.

Melissa and her husband have lived in Germany for six years. In 1997 she saw him only five weeks, when he came home from Bosnia, she said. "When he wasn't deployed out of country, he was in Hohenfels or Grafenwöhr," Germany's maneuver training areas, for three weeks at a time. Fortunately, not every year has been like that one.

SSG Franklin Blanche, a member of the battalion staff of the 793rd MP Bn. in Bamberg, is serving his third European tour in 12 years. "During the other two, I deployed only to train-up exercises," he said. "On this tour, within two years I'd been on two deployments. That doesn't include the train-ups.

"The average soldier here can expect to spend six months out of the year away from home station," Blanche said. He deployed to Kosovo for several months as a criminal investigator at Camp Bondsteel.

"Deployments are tough," said Blanche, who deployed to Bosnia in 1996 with the 630th MP Co. "But I have a strong, supportive wife. Not everyone does. Lately, we've seen a high percentage of separations and divorce. Now, when you even mention deployment, there are more repercussions before the deployment."

SSG Nathan Brookshire, a physical-security inspector with the 279th Base Support Bn. in Bamberg, deployed to Bosnia for seven months in 1997. He spent the three previous months attending the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course.



## Duty in Germany





**USAREUR-based soldiers undergo predeployment training at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels.**

1LT Heide Ulrich, a platoon leader with 3rd Corps Support Command's 240th Quartermaster Co. in Bamberg, was in Albania from April to August 1999.

"It was my first deployment," said Ulrich, who had taken over the platoon only two weeks earlier and suddenly was responsible for all the fuel for the task force.

Her unit set up two fuel "farms," with a 420,000-gallon capacity, collectively, and issued more than 1 million gallons of fuel.

In October, SPC Michael Bassett, a tanker from the 3rd Bde.'s 2nd Bn., 63rd Armor, in Vilseck, was preparing to deploy to Macedonia by Christmas. Even though his company's 14 tanks weren't expected to go with them, he was up to his elbows in grease keeping them in top-notch condition.

Earlier, his unit had trained at Hohenfels and Grafenwöhr, and had completed several road marches — "something we don't typically do as tankers," Bassett said. "Because this is my first permanent duty station, I was still green when I arrived."

His unit had been in the field roughly 80 percent of the time between February and June 1999, Bassett said. "I'm not so green anymore."

Similar stories of long absences are common across U.S. military installations in Germany. They affect virtually every unit and every MOS.

Their effect on individuals and

families is as varied as the people themselves.

SSG Marion Jerdee, a platoon sergeant with the 11th Aviation Regiment's C Troop, 6th Squadron, 6th Cavalry, an AH-64 Apache attack helicopter unit in Illesheim, said, "This is major hell for a family." Her unit led British forces into Kosovo with KFOR's initial entry force in June, 1999.

"My husband's in the other attack squadron, the 2nd Sqdn., 6th Cav. We have a two-year-old daughter. And we recently separated," Jerdee said.

"We deploy at least once a year on a major deployment, plus practice gunnery," she said. "This unit, as a whole, hasn't quit training or deploying since I arrived two years ago."

Jerdee, who ensures scheduled and unscheduled maintenance is performed on the Apaches, said it's been difficult coming home to someone who experiences the same stresses she does because of the units' high OPTEMPO. "Korea was a piece of cake compared to this tour," she said.

"This place became a ghost town when everyone deployed," said SPC Damien Greenwell, a mailroom clerk from the 1st Bn., 77th Armor, in Schweinfurt, who was among the few soldiers in the rear in October, when most of his unit was still in Kosovo.

Despite the high OPTEMPO in Germany, 1st Inf. Div. commander

MG John P. Abizaid said soldiers stationed there are making the most of their overseas tours, going where the Army needs them to go, and making time to enjoy Germany when they can.

"The 1st Inf. Div. probably has the highest OPTEMPO of any division in the Army," Abizaid said. "Surprisingly, it also has a high re-enlistment rate. That's testament to the fact these soldiers believe in what they're doing. They enjoy what they're doing."

"For soldiers, it's rewarding to do real-life missions. And Army statistics show units that frequently deploy have higher retention rates than those that don't," said LTC Lou L. Marich. He commands Bamberg's 54th Engineer Bn., the unit that laid the now-famous bridge across the Sava River in December 1995, allowing the first U.S. ground troops into Bosnia.

The fact that many soldiers actually enjoy deploying is, however, often difficult for spouses to accept, said Chaplain (CPT) Robert Nay, a 1st Inf. Div. chaplain in Schweinfurt.

Every time a spouse deploys, the other one is suddenly alone again, said 2nd Bde. Chaplain (MAJ) Allen Kovach. Before, when he or she was tired, the other could step in and care for the children or prepare a meal.

"We can't say, 'You're going to have trouble when your soldier-spouse leaves and when he or she returns,'"

*(continued on page 40)*



**The shops, restaurants and historic sites of old-town Bamberg are familiar territory to the soldiers stationed nearby.**

## Duty in Germany

(continued from page 39)

said Chaplain (LTC) Glenn Davis, the 409th Base Support Bn. chaplain in Vilseck. "That doesn't always happen. But problems usually do come to the surface when marriages are weak or new."

"Of some 7,000 U.S. soldiers in Kosovo today, most are from the 1st Inf. Div., and roughly half are married," Kovach added.

"Being apart for anniversaries, birthdays and other special occasions is sometimes more difficult for the younger soldiers," Kovach said. In Kosovo, Bosnia and Macedonia, "we try to help the soldiers by giving them a place to worship and someone to talk to about their feelings. And we give them encouragement," he said.

Before Christmas, 1st Inf. Div. mailroom clerks worked overtime trying to keep up with holiday mail and equipment being returned early by redeploying soldiers. Yellow ribbons adorned fences, front doors and unit dayrooms. And people showed their support by donning tiny yellow-ribbon pins.

Meantime, Army Community Services representatives, who established the family assistance center when the first news of deployment came in March 1999, worked on welcome-home events. Family Advocacy Program representatives created a class called "Re-romancing Your Sweetie With Spirit."

Chaplains began conducting reunion briefings with spouses in the rear and soldiers downrange. And units planned individual welcome-home celebrations.

"The biggest challenge in Germany, where spouses are away from home and can feel isolated, is to get them to connect with family support groups," Davis said. "A lot of spouses live on the economy, and when they're isolated they have a harder time coping."

People tend to think about family support groups only before deployments, said Vilseck ACS Outreach Program coordinator Ed Lada. "But because our soldiers are often away from home station, for training, we



**PV2 Regina Swindle, a member of the Bamberg-based 317th Maint. Bn., repairs a TA312 telephone set.**

meet once a month, year-round, to keep our families informed and address their needs." [See accompanying story on the 98th Area Support Group.]

"You'll always have some people who cling to the Army housing units, never venturing out into the country where they live," said Brookshire's wife, Melanie. "But a whole family can go many places here for as little as \$20. MWR offers special tours, and local bus and rail transportation is relatively inexpensive and very dependable."

Spouses often don't know what the Army has to offer, she said. If they lived off post in the states, they may never have had a reason to go on post. Everything they needed was at their fingertips at the local shopping centers.

"When I pick up new soldiers at the airport, I tell them that Bamberg is one of the most beautiful places on earth," said Brookshire, "and that the Bamberg military community has repeatedly earned Army Community of Excellence awards for its facilities and services."

"We've won awards not necessarily because our buildings and facilities are better than anyone else's, but because the people here regard the Bamberg military community as their

hometown," said LTC Winston Lewis, commander of Bamberg's 279th BSB. "I tell soldiers and families that if they don't get what they need here, they should come and look for me."

"One of our strengths is the German nationals who are our liaison to the community. We hold cookouts and invite them. And they invite us to virtually every fest in town," Lewis said.

"The biggest difference for soldiers coming here is living in a country outside the United States, far from



## Duty in Germany





**A soldier of the 1st Bn., 77th Armor, completes an inspection checklist while pulling maintenance on an M1A1 tank.**

home,” Marich said. “There are some challenges, among them frequent deployments and a higher cost of living in and around major cities.”

There isn’t a shopping mall in every town either, and gas stations and convenience stores aren’t open 24 hours a day. For those reasons, “families in Germany have to be a little more organized. They can’t wait until

the last minute to do things,” he said.

“I tell newly arrived soldiers that the language difference should be the least of their concerns,” Marich added. “If you at least attempt to say ‘Guten Morgen,’ the Germans will come back and speak practically fluent English with you. They’re required to study English from the fifth grade on.

“The greatest opportunities for me as a soldier in Germany include going on real-world deployments, participating in partnership activities with German soldiers to discover how they do things, and training in a unique part of the world with soldiers from countries hoping to enter NATO,” Marich added.

SFC Richard Nelson, NCOIC of Bamberg’s 793rd MP Bn., said being stationed in Germany has been a very positive experience.

“I have special ties to Germany, through my wife, as do many other U.S. soldiers married to German nationals,” he said. “We all want to stay and learn more about the beautiful country and its rich history and culture.”

Nelson said that even with training and deployments, “soldiers do have time to travel.” Virtually all of Europe is at their doorstep.

In December, several dozen Bamberg soldiers planned to spend Christmas with German families through a long-standing U.S. Army, Europe, program called “Operation Good Cheer.”

“You can reach nine countries from here in eight hours or less, and they’re all beautiful, even in winter,” said SGT Kenneth Owens, a member of the 6th Bn., 52nd Air Defense Artillery, near Ansbach.

“And some of the largest things in the world are here — the Frankfurt International Car Show, the Montrose Jazz Festival and Oktoberfest,” said Owens, whose battalion returned from Incirlik, Turkey, in August.

“We have a lot of really great benefits,” Nelson added, “including a 50-percent reduction on the cost of gasoline with our ID cards.” And Germany’s 16-percent value-added tax — applied to purchases over 100 Deutsch Marks, including things like

auto repairs — doesn’t apply to soldiers’ purchases.

With housing paid for, some families manage to save a considerable amount of money. And while soldiers are deployed for contingency operations they draw hazardous duty pay, \$350 per month for the period of time they’re deployed, typically six months or more. They also earn \$2 per day separation pay.

Pilots and crew chiefs collect aviation career incentive pay, in addition to hazardous duty pay, which ranges from \$125 to \$840 per month, said LTC David Abramowitz, commander of Task Force Gunfighter, the aviation task force currently in Kosovo.

“When soldiers re-enlist in a tax-free environment, their entire re-enlistment bonus is tax-free as well,” said LTC Kurt Lambert, commander of  
*(continued on page 42)*



**At Conn Barracks in Schweinfurt, 77th Armor mailroom clerk SGT Anthony Thornabar sorts Kosovo-bound packages.**



**Soldiers in Humvees patrol a Kosovo town as residents look on. USAREUR units now make up the bulk of U.S. military forces in Kosovo.**

## Duty in Germany

*(continued from page 41)*  
the 6th Bn., 52nd ADA.

While the Army wrestles with frequent deployments and the effects of downsizing, Abizaïd said, "the nature of the Army is that you have to constantly train because of the flux of soldiers and leaders with each summer rotation.

"What we got ready for six months ago, isn't what we need to get ready for today," Abizaïd added. "Kosovo's a prime example. First we thought we'd have to go in fighting. Then we learned it was a peacekeeping mission. Later we realized the situation over there is much more dangerous than we thought."

Training is critical, Abizaïd said,

# Supporting Soldiers and Fam

**A**REA support groups in Germany provide deployed soldiers peace of mind that their families are OK, said 98th ASG spokesman Don Klinger.

Some 3,000 people make up the Würzburg-based 98th ASG, which supports about 42,000 people, said Klinger. They are responsible for everything from housing maintenance and security to utilities, schools, clubs, daycare centers and morale, welfare and recreation services.

The 98th ASG is the largest of three ASGs in Bavaria, in the number of troops it supports. Together with its base support battalions — in Schweinfurt, Bamberg, Giebelstadt, Kitzingen, Illesheim and Ansbach — the 98th supports soldiers and family members, as well as retirees and others eligible for such support.

"We're a society superimposed on another society, an apples-to-oranges, nuts-and-bolts organization that provides everything to the soldier and



**Family support groups within USAREUR ease the transition from stateside life to life in Europe, and help relieve the stress on the spouses of deployed soldiers.**

family member 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Klinger. "Each BSB is different, based on its geographical area and tenant units."

"In the last year, every battalion in this brigade deployed to Macedonia or Kosovo. Two years ago they were deployed to Bosnia," said CPT David

Reardon, the rear detachment representative for the 1st Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade.

"We formed the Family Support Rear Detachment Council that initially met daily, then twice weekly, to organize special events and services for those left behind," Reardon said.



## Duty in Germany



“but we have to make sure we’re smart enough when we come back from a deployment to allow soldiers to be reintegrated into their families.

“We have to train our soldiers on skills that disintegrated while they were on peacekeeping missions, but that doesn’t mean they’re training 300 days out of every year,” Abizaid said. “People forget that even during World War II, we didn’t keep soldiers on the line. We rotated them from front to rear.

“Our soldiers in Kosovo have been fired upon with mortars, recoilless rifles and small arms. They’ve had to pick up bodies and investigate murders. I don’t anticipate them being reinstituted for six to nine months after they return from that challenging deployment,” Abizaid said.



**Chaplains in deployed units help soldiers cope with family separations through religious services and counseling.**

*“... we have to make sure we’re smart enough when we come back from a deployment to allow soldiers to be reintegrated into their families.”*

Some 65,000 U.S. soldiers are still forward-deployed in Europe 10 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, USAREUR officials said.

Given the ongoing threats to peace and stability in USAREUR’s area of operations, the Army’s presence in Europe — and the challenges facing the soldiers stationed there — are sure to continue. □

# families

**Story and Photos by  
Heike Hasenauer**

“After the initial deployment of 2,200 of our soldiers in June, we realized a need for more school counselors to help our children face their mom’s or dad’s deployment,” said LTC James Comish, commander of the 280th BSB in Schweinfurt. Chaplains, who normally would have heard the children’s concerns, had all deployed with their units.

“Department of Defense Education Association officials funded more counselors, a school psychologist and a clinical psychiatrist,” Comish said. Army Reserve unit-ministry teams also augmented deployed chaplains.

Local German police conducted cooperative patrols in U.S. housing areas to alleviate security concerns before MPs could arrive to replace those who deployed, Comish added.

“Because our soldiers are constantly deploying to world hot spots, we have unit service coordinators — typically a first sergeant or family liaison person — at every unit to plan

special events. They also conduct traveling ‘road shows’ that advertise what ACS offers,” said Jo Eels, Schweinfurt’s ACS director.

Eels said support personnel encourage spouses to remain in Germany



**Würzburg Elementary School pupils have the same opportunities for mental and physical growth as their stateside peers.**

rather than return to the United States when the soldier deploys, “because the support is here. This is where the people are who understand what you’re going through,” she said.

Soon after Teresa Reese’s husband, 1st Bn., 77th Armor, commander LTC Timothy Reese, deployed to Kosovo, she helped form a cooperative with restaurants in the Schweinfurt area. “We got them to hold family nights, and we got theaters to show more family movies,” Reese said.

On the U.S. military installation, businesses stayed in business, too, because family members were encouraged and enticed to use them. Clubs and bowling alleys sponsored children’s events. And childcare was provided to give adults some much-needed time away from their children.

“A most difficult time was after the deaths of three soldiers in Kosovo,” Reese reflected. Two died in vehicle accidents, the other was electrocuted.

*(continued on page 44)*